The Byzantium Problem in Sudan: The continued existence of this old nation requires competent comprehension of what Rome has been doing

Mazin Sakharov, 30 December 2025

Abstract

The plight of the Sudanese nation today is a cause for sober reflection. An existential problem is threatening to destroy the world's most ancient recorded civilisation, and along with it its erstwhile people. The people of Sudan may be wondering, whatever happened to the Blessed Land of their forefathers, whose script was the holy symbol of God? If this is a plot, who then are the plotters? Could one antagonist be behind it all? Or is it rather a case of *coordinated assault* by different players? A valid question may be posed: could an industrious and jealous Roman state be behind these problems? Why Romans? The Romans, including the elites of the Greco-Roman (GR) times have a good reason to feel resentful towards Æthiopia, one of the old names of Sudan. In a time much older than our own, the position of the historical antagonism between the ancient GR world and Aethiopia is of a gambler condemned to witness his fortunes melt away in a streak of losing bets to one formidable 'rival'. Meroe, Aethiopia's capital is the opponent who holds a perfect winning record against the opposition. If that were to be true, why would anyone *want* to lock horns with an almost invincible rival? A clue lies in the contrast in the skill set of challengers v challenged: such is the gap in quality to Aethiopia's favour, an honest contest is almost bound to be one-sided. Neither Athens, nor Rome has any superior glory to impress Meroe with, or failing that to lecture and patronise her. And so it dawned on the Greco-Roman world, this essay argues to try to solve the problem by eliminating it – if the protagonist does not exist, then neither the problem*. Here, an old crime scene is visited: the intrigue and propaganda against Sudan by various antagonists, including Greeks, Romans, and some of those who call themselves Jews, and their allies.

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* If the person does not exist, then neither the problem is attributed to Stalin.

Forward. A Methodology for investigating fraud, deception and manipulation of history

منهج للتحقيق في أنواع من التلاعب بالتاريخ: التزوير, التدليس والتلاعب

Within a moral meaning, the generic term for a flawed historical record composed, or contributed to by a colluding party that is appraised to be disinterested in finding, let alone showing truth is 'fraud'. A writer need not necessarily make things up, or dishonestly assign authorship to a non-rightfully recpient in order for their historical work to attain this label. An important class of fraud that often goes unchallenged is *discrediting* – that is denying credit where credit is due. It is a problem that in the opinion of this essay is incurable. Presenting sources that are *known to be* seriously questionable in order to tarnish the class, status or reputation of nations and those representing her constitutes a degree of malice warranting serious exposure. On the other hand, *failure to examine sources* from which the analyses made and conclusions drawn are critical and crucial to a nation's self-esteem and people's reputations, including reputations and prestige of national characters is part of a harmful class of historical malpractice. Even though the wilful use of questionable or frivolous sources, and the mere use of them are to be distinguished by degree of guilt so that blame is properly apportioned, the result is the same, and the two methods seem, prima facie not dissimilar: a utilisation of malicious propaganda or slander. The professional and moral duty to check the veracity of sources, and in some respect the agenda of the 'old hands' who supplied or composed them. A British historian who, despite her *ideological* controversies, did point attention to the importance of examining sources as well as the *agenda* of their authors. In this respect, in the Classical era, the man who holds an impeccable record is unquestionably Herodotus, a worthy 'father of history'. Ironically he has been met with so much flak even slander**.

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* Nesta Webster in her opus, The French Revolution: A Study in Democracy

** Herodotus was even called 'father of lies'. Even though he does not need it, Appendix 1 seeks to redeem Herodotus with reference to some of his writings.

Introduction: The Resentment of the Classical World

The problem of Byzantium, and before them the Persians and the Assyrians was only too obvious: for all those mentioned and many others who came after them, they could only reduce Egypt, the daughter, but not the mother. Aethiopia became the house that refuses to be burned down, having had its front yards decimated.

All things being equal, a Greek or Roman, at least an honest one of their number would not dare talk down to Aethiopia. But he would fancy his chances taking an Aeothiopian or an Egyptian to a challenge on, say sophistry, or which nation was first glorious before the heavens. The record need not be quoted at length to the challenger to be set straight. An Aethiopian would quickly and calmly remind the Roman what this-and-that of his own countrymen had once admitted:

- Pray, do you recognise this text, and let me quote (1):

> **Aethiopia was the** first established country on earth; and the Aethiopians were the first to set up the worship of the gods and to establish laws

And since the quote belonged to Stephanus of Byzantium, the challenged would promptly relinquish his challenge. Humiliated, he would bow his head down and go away, wondering how on earth could ‘these bloody people’ be beaten in any context.

If the challenger was Greek, then it would suffice to quote Solon to him on the same score. If he has not heard of Solon, or could not be bothered to find out, he will politely be told that, irrespective of his position towards belief in *a* religion about the origin of the Gods of his nation:

> Osiris and his Bull were black, and all the Gods and Goddesses of Greece were black, at least this was the case with Jupiter, Bacchus, Hercules, Apollo, Ammon.
>
> Source (2)

And when a Judean is ambitious enough, or vain enough to claim all of Judea for his tribe, a voice from Egypt, would remind him of what an Egyptian priest would typically articulate to Moses:

> Why will you jews not accept our culture, our religion and our language? You are a tribe of nomad herdsmen; we are a mighty people. You have no cities nor no wealth: our cities are hives of humanity and our galleys, trireme and quadrireme, laden with all manner merchandise furrow the waters of the known globe. You have but emerged from primitive conditions: we have a literature, a priesthood, an agelong history and a polity. You pray to a local and obscure idol: our temples, majestic and mysterious, are the abodes of Isis and Osiris, of Horns and Ammon Ra. Yours serfdom, awe and humbleness
>
> Source, Ulysses (3)

The mosaic man might retaliate that God struck down the King of Egypt and set Moses free with a miracle for all to see. Unperturbed, the Egyptian would remind the mosaic man that it took Egypt's sense of fairness to warn off a foreigner like Moses that he was going to get killed unless he fled on the spot. In doing so, Egypt saved Moses before he was to be saved by the Almighty. The moral of the story, for every overbearing Egyptian, or once in a while bad Pharaoh of Egypt, there are probably three fair and just ones.

To cut a long story short, the ancient world had a big chip on its shoulder. One side of the chip said 'Egypt', the other cried 'Aethiopia. Here is a people whose nation, to start with legitimately claims to be the oldest and most coherently told memory on record. Its achievements and monuments bear witness to awesome human intellect. And if this was not already too much, the nation holding that record of verifiable splendour took it one step further: its womb gave birth to another brilliant creation – Aegyptos. This Aegyptos, which was nothing but an extension of Aethiopia, then an expansion of it made the Nile Valley the envy of the World. Aethiopico-Aegyptos, or Nehesu-Kemet, or simply the Wisdom and Splendour of the Man of the Nile Valley provided space for others to behold and attempt to improve one's lot with the fruits of this creation. In other words, everyone wanted a bit of Egypt, which, going

towards the source also meant a bit of Aeothiopia. This condition of accessing benefits, so long as the source was acknowledges created a lot of grievances among peoples who came later to the scene. The problem was not that Aethiopia had nothing better to do than humiliating others who sought enlightenment in her arts and sciences; it was more that Aethopia was a socialist society, in the sense of individual labour served the collective good. This is not to say there was no individual ownership. The scribe, chemist, physician, astronomer land surveyor, labourer and soldier worked quietly and proudly to serve a larger cause. For polymaths and those who made outstanding contributions were worthy of a special mention. That would be about it. Another dimension of this socialism was that one could come from humble beginnings and rise to the top. That's why individual patents were not the norm in Egypt (4).

Before the birth of Jesus, Strabo said terrible things about Aethiopians (5). Before him Diodorus falsely condemned the Egyptians as practisers of incest (6). When the morality of the Greco-Roman society was called into question, several tongues diverted attention from the main problem by running wild prints on Egypt as a representation of a loose woman (7). The list of Greeks and Romans, and those who spoke their tongue who had an axe to grind respecting Aethiopia and Egypt in that earlier classical period is a long one. But the problem was not confined to discrediting: bashing Aethiopia, or condemning Egypt; there was an additional disease called plagiarism (8). But that old issue was confounded with the rise of the Old Testament Apologists. Josephus gave a new meaning to the term, both qualitatively and quantitatively (9). When the issue was indeed investigated it was announced by some Apologists like Clement of Alexandria that plagiarism equalised scientific and literary theft by the Greeks from the Egyptians, and theological theft by the Greeks from the Old Testament (10) The possibility that this narrative was economical with the truth was left to those in the other camp, Apion and his lot (11)

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* Like in the Soviet Union, it was possible for a peasant from the Urals to advance through sheer hard work and become an astronaut.

2. **The Byzantium Problem**

Into the 20th century; a press dispatch was published in 1931 by the New York Times:

> CAIRO, March 8.-New discoveries disclosing the history of Christendom in Central Africa from the sixth to the thirteenth century, A. D., have just been revealed. Professor Hugo Monneret de Villard of Milan Uni- versity has now completed his sea- son's excavations on the Christian sites of Nubia, which is on the Nile between Assuan and Wadihalfa on the Sudanese Egyptian frontier. In ancient times Nubia included the en- tire Sudan. Although there is not a Christian living in Nubia today, there once existed an important civilization there, which continued from the time of Justinian, when the country was converted to Christianity, until it was conquered by the Moslems in the middle of the thirteenth century. Professor de Villard worked in the region between Kasr Ibrim and Wadi Allaqu, which is the vicinity of the famous gold mines exploited by the ancient Egyptians. In this section he made a particular study of four towns, three of which are surround- ed by walls with entrance gates and which afford interesting examples of the fortifications of the Middle Ages. These towns are Kasr Ibrim, The Sheikh Daoud and Ikhmindi. The fourth town, without walls, is Naga Abdalla.
>
> [..] Probably the most important dis-covery in connection with these churches was the remains of a balus- trade around an altar of a Byzantine type, which is believed to confirm the *theory that Christianity in Nubia did not originate from the Copt Church of Egypt but directly from Byzan- tium* [emphasis added].

We have a source in this essay from no less than the Copt Church of Egypt (12) that contradicts the very founding of the theory stated in the last paragraph of the New York Times (NYT) article. Not only does this source contradict the particular allegedly theory just referred to, it would, on the strength of its general theme allow us to question to the alleged dating of Christianity in Nubia, and for that matter Abyssinia! We shall leave to a later part of this study the other claims in the NYT article

3. **The Funj Kingdom: Manipulations Galore**

In his book, ‘Sudan throughout the Centuries’, Professor Mekki Shibeikha reproduces a map purporting to show the Sudan in the long period under the Funj Sultanate, a period of 400-500 years (13).

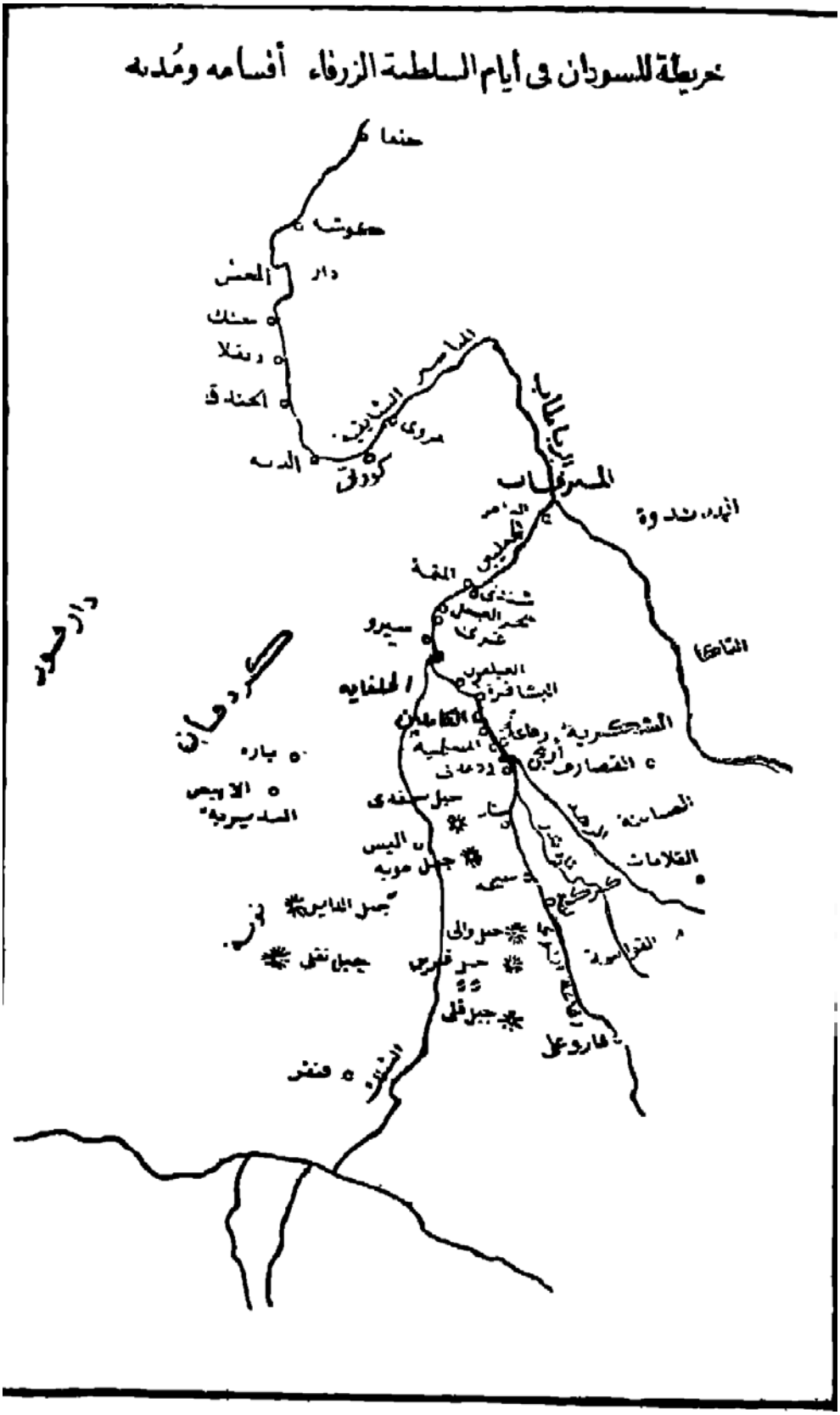

Fig. 1 Map showing the Sudan under the Funj Sultanate. From ‘Sudan throughout the Centuries’, by Mekki Shbeika, ed1, p.547

According to this map, the northern borders of the Funj Sultanate ends just north of the Sudanese cityi of Halfa. Professor Jay Spaulding in his 'The Age of Heroism in Sinnar' (14) talks of northern borders of the Funj without saying where that was.

We have an alternative map that corrects the one given by Shibeika, and shows what in our opinion represents the correct northern border of the Funj state, i.e. at Aswan.

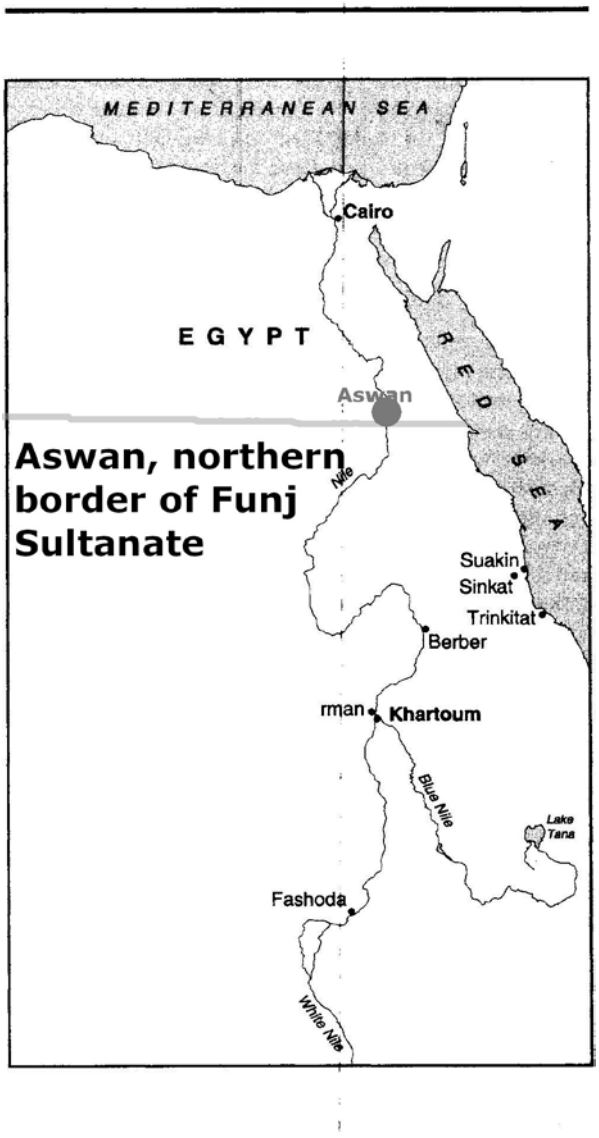

Fig. 2 A map of Sudan under the Funj Sultante and showing the border at Aswan (the historic border, including during the Funj Sultante).

NOTES

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

(11)

(12)

(13)

(14)